

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 T-03

OMB-01 AID-20 IO-12 RSR-01 /141 W
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R 130643 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3720

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

DOD

JCS

CINCPAC

CINCPACREPPHIL

S E C R E T MANILA 2862

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

DOD ALSO FOR DIA

E. O. 11652

TAGS: RP, PINS, PFOR, PBOR, MASS

SUBJECT: PHIL/ MUSLIM CONFLICT: MARCOS COMMENTS ON SABAH ISSUE

REF: MANILA 2777

1. FOLLOWING A MALACANANG LUNCHEON MAR 12 FOR EXIM BANK
PRESIDENT HENRY KEARNS, PRESIDENT MARCOS ASKED ME TO STAY
BEHIND FOR A BRIEF CONVERSATION, AND THIS PROVIDED AN
OPPORTUNITY TO UPDATE OUR EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION
AND VIEWS CONCERNING THE SERIOUS SITUATION IN THE SOUTH.

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2. MARCOS OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY ASKING WHETHER WE COULD NOT SEND SOME AMERICANS DOWN TO COTABATO TO SEE THE SITUATION THERE FOR OURSELVES, SINCE IT WAS NOT GOOD. I EXPLAINED TO HIM WHY WE WERE BEING VERY CAUTIOUS ABOUT ALLOWING AMERICANS TO TRAVEL IN THOSE MUSLIM AREAS WHERE FIGHTING WAS GOING ON. HE QUICKLY UNDERSTOOD, NOTING THAT THERE WERE ALSO MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN PRESS WANDERING ABOUT IN THAT AREA. I SUGGESTED THAT WE COULD OBTAIN THE INFORMATION WHICH MIGHT BE USEFUL TO US IF ONE OF THEIR OFFICERS IN THE GHQ, WHO WAS INVOLVED IN THE COLLECTION OF INTELLIGENCE ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOUTH, COULD BE SET UP AS THE CONTACT POINT FOR OUR DEFENSE ATTACHE. MARCOS THOUGHT THIS WAS A GOOD IDEA AND SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO IT.

3. IN THE COURSE OF THIS BRIEF REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOUTH, I NOTED THAT, IN DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS WHICH WERE TAKING PLACE ON THIS SUBJECT, THE QUESTION OF THE GOP CLAIM TO SABAH ALWAYS CAME UP. MARCOS INDICATED HIS UNDERSTANDING AND REPORTED TO ME THE GIST OF THE MEETING WHICH ROMULO HAD WITH MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER TUN RAZAK ON FEB 14, JUST PRIOR TO THE ASEAN MEETING IN KUALA LUMPUR. RAZAK HAD MADE A POINT OF THE PROBLEM CAUSED BY THE SABAH CLAIM, SAYING THAT IF THE GOP WERE WILLING TO DROP IT, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO COME TO MANILA TO DISCUSS WHAT MIGHT BE DONE TO CALM THE GENERAL SITUATION. MARCOS OBSERVED TO ME THAT THE ORDER WOULD HAVE TO BE THE OTHER WAY AROUND, THAT IS, THE MALAYSIANS SHOULD FIRST SEE TO IT THAT THE SITUATION WAS RESTORED TO WHAT IT WAS PRIOR TO THE OUT-BREAK OF THIS NEW CRISIS, INCLUDING THE REMOVAL OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT BROUGHT IN FROM THE OUTSIDE. THEN, MARCOS SAID, HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO GO TO KUALA LUMPUR TO HOLD TALKS ON THE BROADER PICTURE, INCLUDING SABAH, NOTING THAT HE HAD SOME IDEAS ON THESE MATTERS, WHICH HE, HOWEVER, DID NOT RELAY TO ME.

4. I GAINED THE IMPRESSION THAT SABAH WAS NOT ALL THAT IMPORTANT TO MARCOS' FUTURE SCHEMES OF THINGS, BUT IT WAS NOT LIKELY THAT HE COULD AGREE TO DROP THE CLAIM UNDER EXISTING CIRCUMSTANCES.

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